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### Comments Regarding Bill #6507

## AN ACT CONCERNING REDUCING AND STABILIZING ELECTRIC RATES FOR RESIDENTIAL AND BUSINESS CUSTOMERS

Before the Energy and Technology Committee

February 24, 2009

Prepared by Shirley Bergert<sup>1</sup>

### Recommended Action: Support

**Residential and small business:** This bill will provide lower cost electricity service for residential and small business customers, in exchange for ending retail competition to these customers. Although more than a decade has passed since Connecticut deregulated electric service, viable retail competition has not developed, leaving smaller consumers subject to the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest electric rates in the continental US. Particularly the poor find essential electricity increasingly unaffordable. The cost of electricity will be reduced because it will no longer be based on an artificially high retail rate with built in costs imposed by middlemen.

**Commercial and industrial customers:** The bill continues retail competition for commercial and industrial customers and authorizes the electric distribution companies to provide alternative electricity supply offerings designed to lower their cost of electricity. To build in stability, the offerings may require that customers to take service for minimum periods. During a serious recession, maintaining affordable electric service can be critical for economic development and protection of jobs in the state.

<sup>1</sup> Shirley Bergert serves: as the residential representative on the Energy Conservation Management Board overseeing the expenditure of ratepayer conservation funds in Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16-245m); as the low income representative on the Fuel Oil Conservation Board (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16a-22f); on the Low Income Energy Advisory Board (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16a-41b); and on the Advisory Board of the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University.